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# Eastern Iowa Birdwatch



## The Iowa City Bird Club Newsletter

September 2020 • Volume 40 Number 1

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### Schedule

**Field Trips and meetings** have been altered due to the pandemic – participant safety is paramount and reflected in the changes. Meetings will be held via Zoom. Field trip listings include a description of COVID precautions. Trips may be cancelled due to inclement weather or flooding and will be announced on our Facebook page and by email notification to club members. For more information or questions email [iowacitybc@gmail.com](mailto:iowacitybc@gmail.com).

**September 24, Thursday, 6:45 p.m. Zoom Meeting.** Doug Harr, birder, photographer, and President of Iowa Audubon, will present “Saving Prairies Can Save Grassland Birds.” See page 2 for instructions on joining the meeting by Zoom.

**September 27, Sunday, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. Hawk Watch at Stainbrook Preserve,** located along Mehaffey Bridge Road just north of Sugar Bottom Recreation Area. Join us on the hill to watch for migrating raptors including Broad-winged Hawk, Sharp-shinned Hawk, Cooper’s Hawk, and Red-tailed Hawk. Bring a lawn chair and a spotting scope if you have one. Park on the north shoulder just east of Mehaffey Bridge. Look for the Stainbrook Preserve sign and follow the short path up the hill. COVID precautions: we’ll space lawn chairs six feet or more apart, face coverings are required when moving about, and binoculars and scopes will not be shared.

**October 1 – 25. October Madness Birding Challenge.** This Big Day tournament is similar to an NCAA basketball tournament for birders! It will be held on Thursdays through Sundays on successive weekends in October, with the length and format dependent on the number of participants. Each week participants will be matched against another birder and will attempt to find the most bird species on one day, anywhere in Iowa. Participants may bird on any or all days between Thursday and Sunday, and submit their highest one-day total. Consolation brackets will allow birders to compete for more than one week. Advanced registration is required – contact Jerry Denning by September 27 at [geralddenning50@gmail.com](mailto:geralddenning50@gmail.com).

**October 15, Thursday, 6:45 p.m. Zoom Meeting.** IOU members Karen Viste-Sparkman and Stuart Sparkman will present “Columbia: Birding the Northern Andes.”

**November 19, Thursday, 6:45 p.m. Zoom Meeting.** Mark Bowman, Master Bird Bander, will present “American Kestrel Conservation.”

**December 20, Sunday. Iowa City Christmas Bird Count.** Join us for this holiday tradition! To participate, contact Chris Edwards at [credwards@aol.com](mailto:credwards@aol.com) or (319) 430-4732 by December 16. See page 2 for details, including significant changes to this year’s count due to the coronavirus.

## Join Our Meetings by Zoom

For the foreseeable future, we will hold our regular monthly bird club meetings via Zoom. Enjoy the speakers and interaction with other club members from the comforts of your home!

Joining the September meeting is easy. If you have Zoom installed on your device, you can:

- 1) Click "Join a meeting."
- 2) Enter the Meeting ID 893 5766 0733 and Passcode 190774.
- 3) Click "Join."

If you don't have Zoom installed, you can:

- 1) Click on this link:  
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89357660733?pwd=K1ZoTEVmV1BOYXo2UHRSemRicWxudz09>
- 2) Click on "Open Zoom meeting."
- 3) Join with computer audio.

For subsequent meetings, the Meeting ID and Passcode will be distributed by email via our Google Group. Or contact Sandy at [sandyseads@gmail.com](mailto:sandyseads@gmail.com) or (319) 558-9255.

We hope you will join us!

## Christmas Bird Count Sunday, December 20

This year's Iowa City Christmas Bird Count will be held Sunday, December 20. To participate, please contact Chris Edwards at [credwards@aol.com](mailto:credwards@aol.com) or (319) 430-4732 by Wednesday, December 16.

The Christmas Bird Count program is administered by the National Audubon Society and the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, and it is the longest-running citizen science project in existence. The Iowa City count area is a 15-mile diameter circle centered in North Liberty. It includes parts of Iowa City, all of Coralville,

Lake Macbride, Kent Park, and most of the Coralville Reservoir. The goal is to identify and count all the birds found in the count circle on the day of the count. The circle is divided into ten territories, and traditionally a group is assigned to cover each territory.

Modifications will be made to this year's count due to the coronavirus pandemic. Chris will work with each group leader to subdivide their normal territories, so all participants will be able to bird individually or in family groups. We anticipate there will be no noon or evening meetings.

We need participants in the field and as feeder watchers. If you wish to be a field participant, you will be assigned to a specific area to cover. If you wish to be a feeder watcher, email Chris your address and he will make sure you are in the count circle and will send you a reporting form. If you know others who may want to participate as feeder watchers, please have them contact Chris.

## Membership Dues Waived

Due to the cancellation of most of our events this year, this is expected to be the only issue of Eastern Iowa Birdwatch you will receive this year. Because of this, the Iowa City Bird Club Board voted to extend the membership of all active members by one year. Therefore, if you have paid your dues for 2020, you will not owe any 2021 dues.

If you are not sure if your membership is current, check the mailing label on your paper copy, or contact Treasurer Larry Mahoney at [ltjmahoney@aol.com](mailto:ltjmahoney@aol.com). To renew, complete the membership renewal form on the inside back cover and send it with your check payable to "Eastern Iowa Birdwatch" to Larry Mahoney, 2223 Cae Drive, Iowa City, IA 52246, or go to our website and use your PayPal account to pay.

## **2019 Iowa City Christmas Bird Count**

### **Chris Edwards**

The 69th annual Iowa City Christmas Bird Count was held on Sunday, December 15, 2019. The count area is a 15-mile diameter circle centered on Hwy. 965 and Penn Street in North Liberty. The total of 64 species was below the ten-year average of 67. The all-time high count of 81 species was set in 2012. Temperatures on count day were below average at 5-19° F with light variable winds. The sky was mostly clear in the morning but turned cloudy by mid-afternoon. Area rivers and streams were mostly open, the Coralville Reservoir and other still bodies of water were mostly frozen, and there was no significant snow cover.

#### *Highlights*

Two very rare species were seen this year. Two male Yellow-headed Blackbirds, found in an immense blackbird flock several miles south of Tiffin, provided the first record of this species on our count. And a Savannah Sparrow, seen along the bike trail near the Finkbine Commuter Lot, was only our second record of this species, and the first since 1994. Other unusual species (not seen in most years) were Snow Goose, Trumpeter Swan, American Black Duck, Hooded Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, and Golden-crowned Kinglet.

In contrast to 2018, many species were seen in numbers significantly above the ten-year average, including three record high counts: Trumpeter Swan, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, and Red-winged Blackbird. Other species seen in above-average numbers included Canada Goose, Bald Eagle (ten-year high), Barred Owl, Red-bellied Woodpecker (ten-year high), Downy Woodpecker (ten-year high), Hairy Woodpecker (ten-year high), Northern Flicker, Northern Shrike (record high), Blue Jay (ten-year high), White-breasted Nuthatch (ten-year high), Cedar Waxwing, House Sparrow, Purple Finch (ten-year high), Song Sparrow, Brown-headed Cowbird, Yellow-rumped Warbler (ten-year high), and Northern Cardinal.

Some species were seen in numbers significantly below the ten-year average: Cackling Goose, Mallard, Rock Pigeon, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Ring-billed Gull, Great Horned Owl, American Crow, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, European Starling, Pine Siskin, White-crowned Sparrow, and White-throated Sparrow. Common species (seen in most years) missed entirely were Lesser Scaup, Herring Gull, and Hermit Thrush. Greater White-fronted Goose, Wood Duck, American Coot, American White Pelican, and Common Grackle were seen during count week but not on the count.

#### *Count Effort*

This year there were 37 field observers in 11 parties: Elizabeth Aubrey, Jules Bacon, Kyle Belcher, Katya Boltanova, Fawn Bowden, Mary Bowler, Brian Broderick, Mark Brown, Russell Brown, Barry Buschelman, Chris Caster, Jerry Denning, Karen Disbrow, Seth Dudley, Chris Edwards, Linda Fisher, Jim Fuller, Karole Fuller, Peter Hansen, Rick Hollis, Jim Kettelkamp, Lisa Lombardo, Ken Lowder, Nancy Lynch, Terri Macey, Ramona McGurk, Cheryl Miller, Milana Mitchell, Mary Noble, Jason Paulios, Linda Quinn, Deb Rolfes, Mark Rolfes, Linda Rudolph, Mariko Sato, James Scheib, and Torin Waters. The 66.3 total party-hours was above the 10-year average of 60.2 hours. Three parties spent 3.3 hours in the field owl-watching, which matched the 10-year average of 3.3 hours. There were 13 feeder watchers in 12 locations: Cindy Asmussen, Barbara Beaumont, Kaci Carolan, Julie Englander, Linda Fisher, Janet Hollis, Jenny Hollis Miller, Kate Kostenbader and Ted Lopic, Milana Mitchell, James Scheib, Cindy Spading, and Ronnye Wieland. Feeder watchers spent 28.5 hours watching, compared to the 10-year average of 18.4 hours. This year we collected \$126 in donations for the National Audubon Society Christmas Bird Count program. Thanks to everyone who donated.

**SPECIES LIST**

Snow Goose	1	Barred Owl	6	European Starling	685
Cackling Goose	2	Belted Kingfisher	1	Cedar Waxwing	488
Canada Goose	4756	Red-headed Woodpecker	16	House Sparrow	902
Trumpeter Swan	9	Red-bellied Woodpecker	107	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	62
Mallard	245	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	1	House Finch	142
American Black Duck	1	Downy Woodpecker	136	Purple Finch	17
Common Goldeneye	9	Hairy Woodpecker	32	Pine Siskin	8
Hooded Merganser	1	Northern Flicker	30	American Goldfinch	125
Common Merganser	1	Pileated Woodpecker	4	American Tree Sparrow	390
Ruddy Duck	1	American Kestrel	27	Dark-eyed Junco	536
Ring-necked Pheasant	4	Northern Shrike	5	White-crowned Sparrow	2
Wild Turkey	20	Blue Jay	222	White-throated Sparrow	20
Rock Pigeon	188	American Crow	280	Savannah Sparrow	1
Eurasian Collared-Dove	1	Black-capped Chickadee	193	Song Sparrow	21
Mourning Dove	187	Tufted Titmouse	50	Swamp Sparrow	1
Ring-billed Gull	1	Red-breasted Nuthatch	1	Yellow-headed Blackbird	2
Northern Harrier	2	White-breasted Nuthatch	93	Red-winged Blackbird	4181
Cooper's Hawk	6	Brown Creeper	3	Brown-headed Cowbird	27
Bald Eagle	163	Carolina Wren	2	Yellow-rumped Warbler	8
Red-tailed Hawk	78	Golden-crowned Kinglet	1	Northern Cardinal	324
Rough-legged Hawk	3	Eastern Bluebird	19	TOTAL SPECIES	64
Great Horned Owl	1	American Robin	16	TOTAL INDIVIDUALS	14867

*Some Interesting Trends*

The table below shows the average annual count in each of the last three decades for some representative species. A few species such as Canada Goose, Cooper's Hawk, Bald Eagle, American Kestrel, and Eastern Bluebird have increased. Many more species including Mallard, Great Horned Owl, Black-capped Chickadee, Red-breasted Nuthatch, and American Goldfinch have shown significant declines. Many relatively common species including Ring-necked Pheasant, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Tufted Titmouse, House Finch, and Northern Cardinal increased in the 2000s but then declined in the 2010s, sometimes sharply. Overall, the total species and total birds found each year have remained remarkably consistent over the last three decades.

Species	1990s	2000s	2010s	Species	1990s	2000s	2010s
Canada Goose	814	1493	3484	Tufted Titmouse	59	68	46
Mallard	1709	1497	546	Red-breasted Nuthatch	15	7	3
Ring-necked Pheasant	24	48	3	Eastern Bluebird	4	16	32
Wild Turkey	38	76	26	House Sparrow	1420	878	641
Mourning Dove	107	260	170	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	0	2	25
Sharp-shinned Hawk	1	3	1	House Finch	85	118	109
Cooper's Hawk	1	3	5	American Goldfinch	236	208	134
Bald Eagle	35	80	83	Dark-eyed Junco	588	720	484
Red-tailed Hawk	77	74	68	White-throated Sparrow	16	41	31
Great Horned Owl	7	4	4	Song Sparrow	35	19	11
Barred Owl	8	5	4	Northern Cardinal	314	486	242
Red-bellied Woodpecker	49	90	72	Total Species	66	64	67
Downy Woodpecker	118	136	97	Total Individuals	10835	10385	10697
Northern Flicker	25	34	17	Field Observers	30	35	31
American Kestrel	19	19	24	Field Hours	69	69	60
American Crow	1054	757	390	Owling Hours	3.3	3.6	3.3
Black-capped Chickadee	347	300	203	Feeder Watchers	11	16	9

Nationally, this year marked the 120th consecutive Christmas Bird Count. The results of all counts from 1900 to the present are available online at [www.audubon.org/bird/cbc](http://www.audubon.org/bird/cbc). A table showing the results of every Iowa City Christmas Bird Count from 1951 to the present is available on our website at [www.iowacitybirdclub.org](http://www.iowacitybirdclub.org).

## **March Madness Birding Challenge**

### **Chris Edwards**

In March the coronavirus pandemic swept across Iowa, leading to the cancellation of all social events including our club field trips and meetings. After the NCAA men's and women's basketball tournaments were cancelled, I hatched an idea to invite Iowa City Bird Club members to participate in a March Madness Birding Challenge. Sixteen teams, both individuals and couples, signed up, and I setup a bracket similar to an NCAA tournament bracket. Each week between Thursday and Sunday, participants kept track of the highest number of bird species found in one day. At the end of the round, the birder with the most species in each matchup moved on to the next round. To allow everyone to participate for at least two weeks, I added two consolation brackets, and after four weeks champions were crowned in all three brackets.

Round 1 took place March 26-29 in sometimes foggy, rainy, or windy conditions. One of the fun aspects of the tournament was seeing the spring migration progress, as species arrived and departed. New arrivals this week included Hermit Thrush, Osprey, Horned Grebe, Chipping Sparrow, and Tree Swallow. Carol McNamara found a life bird, a male Bufflehead at Kent Park. Phyllis Black and Sandy Eads both enjoyed some birding time with their grandsons. James Huntington spent multiple days in the field and posted the highest total with 78, and then immediately started scouting for the next weekend! Oddsmakers quickly named him the tournament favorite.

Round 2 was held April 2-5. It was a beautiful weekend and new arrivals included Great Egret, Lesser Yellowlegs, Pectoral Sandpiper, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Loggerhead Shrike, Barn Swallow, Brown Thrasher, Eastern Towhee, Vesper Sparrow, and White-crowned Sparrow. There were some very competitive matches, but perhaps the best was the three-day battle between James Huntington and Diana Pesek. On Thursday James scored 84, and on Saturday they went head-to-head and Diana gained the edge, 86-85. On Sunday they faced off again and James came out on top with 90.

Round 3 on April 9-12 featured some great birds. An influx of shorebirds at Hawkeye Wildlife Area included a rare male Ruff in breeding plumage. Other highlights included Eared Grebe, American Avocet, Dunlin, Long-billed Dowitcher, Bonaparte's Gull, Merlin, Northern Rough-winged Swallow, Lapland Longspur, and Brewer's Blackbird. The weekend featured Final Four matchups in all three brackets. In the top bracket, James Huntington and Mark Brown staged an epic battle on Saturday, with James squeaking out a 97-96 win, and I topped Linda Rudolph, 96-71. In the first consolation bracket, Diana Pesek topped Mark & Deb Rolfes, and Torin & Danelle Waters bested Pat Kieffer.

Round 4 on April 16-19 featured championship matchups in all three brackets. In the second consolation bracket, Linda Quinn topped Jerry Denning, 75-58. In the first consolation bracket, Diana Pesek and Torin & Danelle Waters tied with 98! In the championship bracket, James and I both birded multiple days, but it came down to Sunday. He gambled on a new strategy and visited Shimek State Forest and Lacey-Keosauqua State Park in the morning, before returning north. I stuck to my regular route of Hickory Hill Park, Cone Marsh, Lake Macbride, Coralville Reservoir, and Hawkeye Wildlife Area. The birds were fantastic – James found SE Iowa specialties Bewick's Wren, Louisiana Waterthrush, Northern Parula, and Yellow-throated Warbler among others. Cone Marsh yielded Marbled Godwit, White-faced Ibis, Horned Grebe, and Ross's Goose. American Avocets were at Lake Macbride and Sandy Beach. Eared Grebe was at Cedar River Crossing. Hudsonian Godwits and other shorebirds were at Hawkeye Wildlife Area. Fittingly, James and I met on the mudflats at Hawkeye near the end of the day. In the end, his gamble came up just short, 114-109.

The tournament was great fun during a difficult time. This fall we will have a similar tournament in October, with Jerry Denning serving as bracket-master for the October Madness Birding Challenge.

## 2020 Hickory Hill Park Warbler Walks

### Chris Edwards and Mark Madsen

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, there were no official Warbler Walks in 2020, but several of the regular Warbler Walk leaders and many other birders visited the park individually. Mark Madsen compiled these daily sightings so we have data to compare to other years. The warbler season started earlier than last year, with 4 species on the last day of April. Species diversity was steady but unremarkable for the next three weeks, then peaked on May 20-22 when 22 warbler species were seen each day. The migration then dropped off rapidly, with only two resident species seen on May 25-27. Highlights included Connecticut Warbler on May 21 and 23; Kentucky Warbler on four days; Cape May Warbler on seven days; and Bay-breasted Warbler on five days. Non-warbler highlights included Black-billed Cuckoo May 22 and 25; Olive-sided Flycatcher May 20, 23, and 24; Acadian Flycatcher most days from May 17-27; Philadelphia Vireo May 22; Bell's Vireo May 19; Veery ten days from May 13-25; Clay-colored Sparrow five days from May 4-12; and Summer Tanager May 13. Visit our website for a complete checklist.

SPECIES	04/30/20	05/01/20	05/04/20	05/05/20	05/06/20	05/07/20	05/08/20	05/11/20	05/12/20	05/13/20	05/14/20	05/15/20	05/17/21	05/18/20	05/19/20	05/20/20	05/21/20	05/22/20	05/23/20	05/24/20	05/25/20	05/26/20	05/27/20	DAYS
Ovenbird	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X				18
Worm-eating Warbler																								0
Louisiana Waterthrush																								0
Northern Waterthrush			X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X						14
Golden-winged Warbler				X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						13
Blue-winged Warbler					X	X	X	X	X	X	X					X				X				9
Black-and-white Warbler	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					19
Prothonotary Warbler																								0
Tennessee Warbler									X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				11
Orange-crowned Warbler		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X		X						11
Nashville Warbler	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						18
Connecticut Warbler																	X		X					2
Mourning Warbler													X	X	X	X	X	X	X					7
Kentucky Warbler					X						X					X		X						4
Common Yellowthroat		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	22
Hooded Warbler																								0
American Redstart					X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	19
Cape May Warbler									X	X			X	X		X	X	X						7
Cerulean Warbler																								0
Northern Parula			X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X						15
Magnolia Warbler									X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				11
Bay-breasted Warbler					X							X				X	X	X						5
Blackburnian Warbler			X					X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X					12
Yellow Warbler																X	X	X						3
Chestnut-sided Warbler			X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X				16
Blackpoll Warbler				X								X		X	X	X	X	X						8
Palm Warbler		X	X	X	X			X			X			X			X							8
Pine Warbler																								0
Yellow-rumped Warbler	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X												12
Yellow-throated Warbler																								0
Black-throated Green Warbler			X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X			X	X						11
Canada Warbler													X	X	X	X	X	X	X					7
Wilson's Warbler								X					X	X	X	X	X	X	X					8
TOTAL WARBLER SPECIES	4	6	12	9	15	12	12	15	17	15	16	15	16	19	16	22	22	22	13	6	2	2	2	26

## 2020 Johnson County Spring Count

### Chris Caster

This year's Spring Count was held on May 9, 2020. Due to the COVID crisis, we birded individually and did not meet for lunch. No one was assigned to any particular area, allowing participants to be spontaneous in their decisions of where to go. As a result, we did experience some overlaps in our coverage, but not so much to confound the compilation. Fortunately, we had lots of help this year and so our coverage was still good.

A cold front arrived the night before and we narrowly avoided a freeze. It warmed up nicely though and it was a great day to be out. We managed a species total of 156, which is just shy of the count average, but it took a big effort. We had eleven species of waterfowl. Twelve shorebird species was not good considering the hotspot the Coralville Reservoir had been for many weeks. Warblers were not abundant for anyone and we were fortunate to find twenty-one species.

I feel our best bird was a White-faced Ibis found on a private wetland across the road from Swan Lake. It was certainly a lucky find and unexpected, despite the many ibis that had appeared across Iowa this spring. Also rare on our Spring Count, an Eastern Whip-poor-will was very vocal at Evergreen Landing at Kent Park, and it was seen perched in the pines that evening. A Greater White-fronted Goose was spending time at Sycamore Bottoms nursing a bad leg. Mute Swan and Dunlin were at Cedar River Crossing. A Louisiana Waterthrush was at Squire Point, and a Cerulean Warbler was at Pechman Creek Delta. Upland Sandpipers were found at the pasture at the corner of 500th Street SE Johnson-Muscatine Avenue. An American Bittern, Sandhill Crane, and Prothonotary Warbler were found at Hawkeye Wildlife Management Area west of Round Pond, and a Henslow's Sparrow was in the field south of the Gun Club Ponds. Clay-colored and Harris's Sparrows were both found at a couple of locations. Ken Lowder had a Summer Tanager coming to his feeder. A Common Loon and Common Merganser were found at Terry Trueblood Recreation Area. Common Nighthawks were at Goose Lake in North Liberty.

There were a lot of misses this year, but they were different species than last year. Quite a few migrant warblers and shorebirds were not found, and breeding residents like Pied-billed Grebe, Green Heron, Northern Mockingbird, and Yellow-throated Warbler were missed.

Participants: Constance Aldridge, Barbara Beaumont, Kyle and Lauren Belcher, Phyllis Black, Mark Brown, Chris Caster, Jerry Denning, Drew Dillman, Karen Disbrow, Sandy Eads, Chris Edwards, Nola Edwards, Linda Fisher, James Huntington, Kate Kostenbader, Ted Lepic, Ken Lowder, Dorothy Lunning, Terri Macey, Mark Madsen, Jamie McCoy, Jason McCurdy, Ramona McGurk, Ty Morris, Mary Noble, Jason Paulios, Diana Pesek, Linda Quinn, Kevin Ripka, Deb and Mark Rolfes, Daryl Ropp, Linda Rudolph, Maria Story, Chris and Jody Troyer, Aika Walter, Donna Warner.

#### SPECIES LIST

Greater White-fronted Goose	1	Ruddy Duck	3	Sora	2
Canada Goose	374	Ring-necked Pheasant	42	American Coot	18
Mute Swan	3	Wild Turkey	14	Sandhill Crane	2
Wood Duck	66	Rock Pigeon	19	Killdeer	50
Blue-winged Teal	53	Eurasian Collared-Dove	4	Upland Sandpiper	3
Northern Shoveler	5	Mourning Dove	112	Dunlin	12
Gadwall	5	Common Nighthawk	2	Least Sandpiper	19
Mallard	75	Eastern Whip-poor-will	1	Pectoral Sandpiper	5
Hooded Merganser	4	Chimney Swift	11	Semipalmated Sandpiper	4
Common Merganser	1	Ruby-throated Hummingbird	9	Long-billed Dowitcher	1



American Woodcock	3	Red-eyed Vireo	2	White-throated Sparrow	274
Spotted Sandpiper	12	Blue Jay	131	Henslow's Sparrow	1
Solitary Sandpiper	6	American Crow	63	Savannah Sparrow	5
Lesser Yellowlegs	99	Horned Lark	2	Song Sparrow	140
Greater Yellowlegs	21	Bank Swallow	46	Lincoln's Sparrow	20
Bonaparte's Gull	17	Tree Swallow	562	Swamp Sparrow	14
Franklin's Gull	2	N. Rough-winged Swallow	5	Eastern Towhee	31
Ring-billed Gull	217	Purple Martin	97	Bobolink	2
Caspian Tern	5	Barn Swallow	177	Eastern Meadowlark	58
Black Tern	5	Cliff Swallow	103	Western Meadowlark	4
Forster's Tern	9	Black-capped Chickadee	122	Orchard Oriole	15
Common Loon	1	Tufted Titmouse	37	Baltimore Oriole	100
Double-crested Cormorant	17	White-breasted Nuthatch	60	Red-winged Blackbird	994
American White Pelican	188	House Wren	228	Brown-headed Cowbird	164
American Bittern	1	Sedge Wren	21	Common Grackle	100
Great Blue Heron	4	Marsh Wren	8	Ovenbird	35
White-faced Ibis	1	Carolina Wren	6	Louisiana Waterthrush	1
Turkey Vulture	125	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	55	Northern Waterthrush	16
Osprey	2	Ruby-crowned Kinglet	63	Blue-winged Warbler	4
Northern Harrier	3	Eastern Bluebird	43	Black-and-white Warbler	38
Cooper's Hawk	4	Veery	2	Tennessee Warbler	4
Bald Eagle	11	Gray-cheeked Thrush	4	Orange-crowned Warbler	5
Red-tailed Hawk	16	Swainson's Thrush	18	Nashville Warbler	36
Eastern Screech-Owl	2	Wood Thrush	9	Mourning Warbler	1
Great Horned Owl	2	American Robin	433	Common Yellowthroat	120
Barred Owl	4	Gray Catbird	173	American Redstart	57
Belted Kingfisher	5	Brown Thrasher	27	Cerulean Warbler	1
Red-headed Woodpecker	36	European Starling	117	Northern Parula	16
Red-bellied Woodpecker	65	Cedar Waxwing	6	Magnolia Warbler	4
Downy Woodpecker	59	House Sparrow	166	Yellow Warbler	37
Hairy Woodpecker	16	Eurasian Tree Sparrow	43	Chestnut-sided Warbler	2
Northern Flicker	12	American Pipit	6	Palm Warbler	90
Pileated Woodpecker	4	House Finch	44	Yellow-rumped Warbler	169
American Kestrel	7	American Goldfinch	262	Black-throated Green Warbler	18
Great Crested Flycatcher	28	Grasshopper Sparrow	5	Canada Warbler	1
Eastern Kingbird	29	Lark Sparrow	9	Wilson's Warbler	5
Least Flycatcher	13	Chipping Sparrow	88	Summer Tanager	1
Eastern Phoebe	17	Clay-colored Sparrow	3	Scarlet Tanager	13
Bell's Vireo	5	Field Sparrow	44	Northern Cardinal	262
Yellow-throated Vireo	16	Vesper Sparrow	1	Rose-breasted Grosbeak	104
Blue-headed Vireo	21	White-crowned Sparrow	39	Indigo Bunting	30
Warbling Vireo	17	Harris's Sparrow	5	Dickcissel	10

## Iowa Audubon Corner

### Karen Disbrow

The mission of Iowa Audubon is to identify, protect and restore Iowa's bird habitats, to educate Iowa's citizens toward a greater level of conservation awareness, and to promote enjoyment and greater pride in Iowa's natural ecosystems, birds, and other wildlife. The Iowa City Bird Club, along with other independent bird clubs and local Audubon clubs across Iowa, has representation on the Iowa Audubon board

and contributes \$100 annually. Iowa Audubon also receives monies from individuals through memberships, donations, and bequests.

Fundraising efforts have been hampered this year by the coronavirus pandemic. Some funds were raised through the recent Cy-Hawk Big Day Competition. The Iowa Audubon board is looking for a fundraising event that would raise \$3,000 annually – if you have any ideas, please let me know. To become a member of Iowa Audubon, go to [www.iowaaudubon.org](http://www.iowaaudubon.org). Annual dues are \$15 for individuals and \$20 for families.



## Online Birding Resources – A Collection of Birding Links

Unusual times call for different fixes. Facing the cold months ahead in the midst of a pandemic, we offer this list as a diversion – a way to continue to enjoy birding when it's just too cold to be outdoors. Contributors include Donna Warner, Karen Disbrow, Linda Quinn, and Rick Hollis. Find this page on our website under the *Resources* tab, <http://www.iowacitybirdclub.org/additional-online-resources/>.

### ***Blogs***

**10,000 Birds** <http://www.10000birds.com/about> One of the earlier blogs, but with staying power. Birds, conservation, and travel, with good content.

**Accidental Birders** <https://theaccidentalbirder.com/birding-trips/> Blogs on traveling worldwide to find birds.

**Bird Watcher's Digest blog** <https://otwtb.birdwatchersdigest.com/>

**David Sibley's blog** <https://www.sibleyguides.com/blog/>

**Geoffrey Hill Ornithologist's Blog** <https://www.ornithologistsblog.com/about>

**Jerry's bird photography and blog** <https://birdingthroughglass.blogspot.com/>

**Jeff Jones blog** <https://www.birdoculars.com/>

**Laura Erickson blog and radio program** <https://blog.lauraerickson.com/>

**Sharon Stiteler, Author** <http://www.birdchick.com/blog>

**Young Birder Blogs from eBird** <https://ebird.org/about/resources/for-young-birders/young-birder-blogs>

**ZEISS Nature Blog** <https://blogs.zeiss.com/sports-optics/birding/en/>

### ***Columns***

**Nature's Migration Delights: A Cyber-Tour During a Season of Confinement.** A collection of articles from Audubon.org that takes you on a virtual tour around the country during spring songbird migration. Article VII stops in Iowa, author Tom Taylor's boyhood home.

[Article I](#) Nesting Santa Fe Hummingbirds

[Article II](#) Early Spring Changes

[Article III](#) To Port Aransas

[Article IV](#) North Texas Coast

[Article IX](#) Iowa to Wisconsin

[Article V](#) Central Kansas

[Article VI](#) Plains to Midwest Woodlands

[Article VII](#) Southeast Iowa Transit

[Article VIII](#) Backyard Birding Bonanza

[Article X](#) Return to New Mexico

### ***E-news / Listserv***

**All About Birds E-news** <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/> Read or sign up for email delivery.

**Bird Note** <https://ebird.org/home> Subscribe to the podcast delivered via email.

**IA-BIRD List Serve** <https://iowabirds.org/Connections/Listserv.aspx> A Google Group where members may share information about bird sightings, ask for identification help, and provide details of upcoming events.

**Nature 365** <http://nature365.tv/> A web-documentary of moments of nature. Delivered each day by email is a link to a short video, set in north woods and prairies, that frequently features birds.

### ***Facebook Groups***

**Bird Banding at F. W. Kent Park** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/KentBirdBanding>

**IBird Iowa Birding, Information, Reports and Discussion** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/970468873001383>

**Iowa Birding** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/iowabirding>

**Iowa City Bird Club** <https://www.facebook.com/groups/830060220397361>

### ***Learning / Instruction***

**Bird Academy Collection of Courses** <https://academy.allaboutbirds.org/course-list/> Prices vary.

**Bird Academy Open Lectures** <https://academy.allaboutbirds.org/live-events/>

**Bird ID** <https://academy.allaboutbirds.org/learning-games/>

**Birds Canada** <https://www.birdscanada.org/learn/> Free courses.

**eBird Essentials** <https://ebird.org/news/ebird-essentials> Five short lessons with videos for understanding how and why to use eBird to create bird checklists and more. Includes using eBird in the field, at your feeder, and during your travels.

**How to Know the Birds** <https://www.aba.org/how-to-know-the-birds-by-ted-floyd/> Lessons from author Ted Floyd.

**National Geographic Guide to Birding in North America**

[https://www.thegreatcourses.com/fb7782?ai=187590&cmp=Social\\_Facebook\\_Advertising\\_2020Birding&fbclid=IwAR1Xfnez8VUoY9RvgeGca8hrNads90zlV60mh4qktuJ663B4mbr35y1rIUg](https://www.thegreatcourses.com/fb7782?ai=187590&cmp=Social_Facebook_Advertising_2020Birding&fbclid=IwAR1Xfnez8VUoY9RvgeGca8hrNads90zlV60mh4qktuJ663B4mbr35y1rIUg) From *The Great Courses*, 24 video lectures for the sale price of \$29.95.

**Solving Sparrows** <https://northbranchnaturecenter.org/online/nature/> A one-hour video presentation on sparrow ID. The instructor is humorous and helpful with tips for how to “be with sparrows and learn to look at them.” Scroll down to Solving Sparrows by Bryon Pfeiffer.

### Podcasts

**American Birding Podcast** <https://www.aba.org/podcast/> Weekly 30-minute podcast from American Birding Association. Features news and happenings, recent rarities, with guests from around the birding world.

**Bird Note** <https://www.birdnote.org/listen/shows> Subscribe to this daily, two-minute radio show.

**Birdwatcher's Digest Podcast Central** <https://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/bwdsite/podcasts.php> Several channels!

**Lange Eliot Music of Nature Podcast Series** <https://musicofnature.com/podcast-series/>

**Ray Brown's Talkin' Birds Podcast** <http://www.talkinbirds.com/> A weekly 30-minute radio show about birds and conservation.

### Radar

**Bird Cast** <https://birdcast.info/> Bird migration forecasts in real time.

**Radar Maps: A tool for observing bird migration** [https://www.pauljhurtado.com/US\\_Composite\\_Radar/](https://www.pauljhurtado.com/US_Composite_Radar/) This gives you radar from 3 PM to 3PM.

### Watch Bird Cams and Videos

**Bird Academy Video Collection** <https://academy.allaboutbirds.org/media-library/> From Cornell Lab, 200 instructional and informative videos on everything from bird behavior, song, migration, to ID tips and more. Free and searchable.

**Cornell Lab Bird Cams** <https://www.allaboutbirds.org/cams/>

**The Raptor Resource Project** [raptorresource.org](http://raptorresource.org) Nonprofit based in Decorah, Iowa.

### Websites

<https://abcbirds.org/> American Bird Conservancy

<https://www.allaboutbirds.org/news/> Cornell Lab of Ornithology, with games for kids.

<https://www.audubon.org/> National Audubon Society. So much here!

<https://www.audubon.org/birding/backyard> Backyard Birding for the whole family.

<https://www.audubon.org/bird-guide> Audubon field guide.

<https://www.audubon.org/birding> Lots of articles, more choices. Check out pull down menus.

<https://birdwatchinghq.com/> Backyard Birding and Bird Cams.

<https://www.birdscanada.org/category/features-posts/> Canada's premier bird conservation organization.

<https://ebird.org/home> Enter your sightings and be part of citizen-science data, worldwide.

<https://iowaaudubon.org/> Focus on conservation. Periodic newsletters. Read and join!

<https://iowabirds.org/> Iowa Ornithologists' Union, bringing together birders of all skill levels. Contains a plethora of information, so helpful to birding in Iowa. Read and join!

<https://www.iowacitybirdclub.org/> Iowa City Bird Club for birders in eastern Iowa. Check out photos on Birds of Iowa tab by local bird photographers. Enjoy and join!

<https://johnmurlaws.com/> Nature drawing and journaling, also teacher/parent info.

<https://ornithology.com/> Ornithologist Dr. Roger Lederer, varied multi-subject site.

<http://www.surfbirds.com/index.php> Surf Birds International.

## Field Trip and Meeting Reports

**January 5, Bird Feeder Watch Social.** This year's feeder watch was held at the home and acreage of Barbara Beaumont and Kurt Haman, along Naples Avenue south of North Liberty. We had a bright, sunny, warmish day for January. Ramona McGurk and Mary Noble recalled being at our home one spring many years ago, when Bud Gode led us on a hike. This time we stayed inside and enjoyed the warmth of the wood stove while watching a steady stream of birds.

A group of five extended the event with a hike through our property, enjoying a nice variety of habitats – woods, small prairie and oak savanna, and riparian edge along Muddy Creek. Three additional species, Red-tailed Hawk, Northern Flicker, and Bald Eagle, were seen on the hike. After every guest had left, a group of 13 Wild Turkeys came by to check out the feeder, and found it not to their liking.

Participants: Barbara Beaumont (co-host), Phyllis Black, Mary Bowler, Chris Brochu, Brian Broderick, Jerry Denning, Karen Disbrow, Therese Guedon, Kurt Hamann (co-host), Katy and Peter Hansen, Doina Johnson, Larry Mahoney, Ramona McGurk, Mary Noble, Linda Quinn.

Birds: Mourning Dove, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Northern Flicker, Blue Jay, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, House Finch, American Goldfinch, Dark-eyed Junco, Northern Cardinal.

*– Barbara Beaumont*

**January 12, Coralville WinterFest** at Iowa River Landing. We provided information about the club and about winter bird feeding, and setup spotting scopes for Bald Eagle viewing. At least 25 eagles flew up and down the Iowa River and perched in trees, providing excellent viewing for attendees. We handed out over 80 IOU

Checklists. Thanks to Linda Fisher and Ben Rowold for helping with this event.

*– Karen Disbrow*

**January 29, Annie Gill Craft Table at the Coralville Library.** The bird club participated in this event. Phyllis Black and Karen Disbrow setup a “Make a Suet Ball” table. Using suet squares cut in quarters, participants wearing gloves rounded the suet and then rolled it in finch birdseed. This was covered in a loosely-woven natural material and then tied with twine to hang outdoors. Thirty-six people ages 2 to 80 participated. It was great fun and we look forward to doing it again.

*– Karen Disbrow*

**February 1, Bald Eagle Watch at Iowa River Power Restaurant and Dam.** We set up two spotting scopes on the stairs to the bridge, for visitors to view Bald Eagles and other birds. Thanks to Linda Quinn and Phyllis Black for helping with this event.

*– Karen Disbrow*

**February 9, Quad Cities.** The forecast called for rain in the morning, and that was what we got. We had word that a female Harlequin Duck had been seen along the Butterworth Parkway in Moline earlier in the week so that is where we started. At the first stop upriver from the I-74 bridge we found a few Common Goldeneyes and Common Mergansers, and what would be the only cormorant for the day. We continued north along the river making stops to check for birds.

Unfortunately, there were few birds, and we were unable to add anything new until we reached Lock and Dam 14 above Hampton, IL. There we found two Mute Swans above the dam. There were a good number of gulls flying about below the spillway and so we walked the earthen dam out to view them. It was raining pretty steadily at that time and it was hard to keep our spotting scopes dry. An adult “Kumlien’s” Iceland Gull was flying about, but it proved difficult to get anyone else on it. It had gray primaries with whitish undersides. Otherwise most of the gulls appeared to be Herring. On the walk back to our

vehicles we noticed that a small number of gulls were now resting on the ice above the dam. This included a mix of Ring-billed and Herring Gulls and one adult “Thayer’s” Iceland Gull. This bird was noticeably smaller than the Herring Gulls and had a decidedly rounded head shape with a dark eye. It was also snow white on the head, neck and breast. Its primaries appeared black rather than gray.

The group was getting pretty wet when we left the dam, so when we got to the town of Rapid City we birded from inside the vehicles. There we added a few Canvasbacks, but nothing more, and so we crossed back over to Iowa and a lunch break at the Hardee’s in Bettendorf. I think we all welcomed the chance to dry off a bit.

Heading into Davenport we made a quick stop at Lock and Dam 15. There were a number of Herring Gulls flying about and fortunately they were all easily identifiable from inside the vehicles. We were pleasantly surprised to find more ice and gulls at Credit Island, and the rain had begun to let up. There were a small number of gulls near the park entrance and one appeared to be a first-winter “Thayer’s” Iceland Gull. It was slightly smaller than the Herring Gulls and more uniformly light brown except for the slightly darker primary and tertial feathers with frosty edgings. We also added Belted Kingfisher and Mallard nearby. We made a half-loop around Credit Island and also found a rather chilly Great Blue Heron perched in the timber along the backwater ice. We also began to add some perching birds, the most notable being Pileated and Red-headed Woodpeckers.

At Fairmount Cemetery there was no snow beneath the hemlocks, so it was hard to tell if there had been any crossbill activity. The only birds we found in the hemlock grove were chickadees. The feeders near the upper entrance were busy as usual. Lots of Eurasian Tree Sparrows were about. The group appeared to be most interested in the Pine Siskins though. Lastly a Fox Sparrow was found in the nearby wooded ravine. Nice way to finish. Thanks much to Barry and Mark for driving.

Participants: Mary Bowler, Brian Broderick, Barry Buschelman, Chris Caster (leader), Jerry Denning, Jamie McCoy, Ed O’Brien, Deb and Mark Rolfes.

Birds (34 species): Canada Goose, Mute Swan, Mallard, Canvasback, Common Goldeneye, Common Merganser, Rock Pigeon, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Iceland Gull, Double-crested Cormorant, Great Blue Heron, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Belted Kingfisher, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Pileated Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, European Starling, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, House Finch, Pine Siskin, American Goldfinch, Fox Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, White-throated Sparrow, Northern Cardinal.

– *Chris Caster*

**February 16, Freeze Fest** at Terry Trueblood Recreation Area lodge in Iowa City. Thanks to Ben Rowold and Jerry and Gerene Denning for setting up the information displays and bird bingo game for kids.

– *Karen Disbrow*

**February 20, Meeting.** Our guest speaker was Professor Chris Brochu, a vertebrate paleontologist at the University of Iowa. He presented “What is a Species?” Chris gave a very informative talk on crocodiles, birds, and species concepts. He also had great photos of African wildlife. Our spotlight speaker was Jerry Denning. He spoke to us about his trip to Alaska, sharing great photos of a variety of Alaska’s birds and wildlife. This included the elusive Falcated Duck.

During the business portion of the meeting, Deb Rolfes showed us some new merchandise, including bags and scarves, with the Iowa City Bird Club logo. From our website, go to the Club Info menu and then the ICBC Merchandise page.

Larry Mahoney presented the Treasurer's report. Expenses to date for 2020 are \$326.10, with income of \$356.31, giving us a current balance of \$1,789.68. At the end of 2019 we had 133 active members. After three reminders, 38 have not yet renewed their memberships and will be moved to the inactive list. Karen provided reminders of upcoming club events.

Attendees: Phyllis Black, Mark Bowman, Debbie Bryant, Jerry Denning, Mark and Sandy Eads, Chris Edwards, Therese Guedon, James Huntington, Susan Jaecques, Elsa Janie, Khristen Lawton, Terri Macey, Larry Mahoney, Linda Quinn, Deb and Mark Rolfes, Jim Walters, Tom Wells.

– *Sandy Eads*

**February 22, Macbride Nature Recreation Area.** Twelve birders took advantage of a perfect winter day to get out in nature and study our winter birds! An added bonus was our special guest and fellow birder, Tamra Elliott, Land Manager of MNRA. Tamra educated us on the rich history of MNRA, along with current and upcoming conservation activities. Together the group identified 20 bird species, highlighted by multiple rounds of American Robins, great looks at Brown Creepers, Red-headed Woodpeckers, and a Purple Finch. The trip covered four areas of MNRA.

The trip started at the main upper parking lot where we were welcomed by a lone American Robin, a good sign to start the day. The group stayed on paved roadways, as the trails were still quite icy and slick. Around the Fox Campground trail, we got great looks at a Brown Creeper, in addition to Black-capped Chickadees and Tufted Titmice. Back near the parking lot, Tamra spoke passionately about the oak tree reclamation project and introduced us to the "Mama Oak" and "Guardian Oak." These 300-year-old oaks served as witness trees for early surveyors. While learning about Mama and Guardian we witnessed multiple rounds of American Robins flying overhead. On a walk along the main road near the parking lot we got great looks at Red-bellied

and Red-headed Woodpeckers showing off their brilliant colors in the sunlight.

Our next stop was the Bluestem Prairie, located near the Falcon Shelter. Here the group was treated to soaring Red-tailed Hawks, White-throated Sparrows, and two brilliant Eastern Bluebirds. Tamra educated us on the prairie restoration project and the value of controlled burns to properly restore the prairie without causing unnecessary damage.

Our final stop was at the Iowa Raptor Project parking lot. We took a walk along the road to see the old growth forest that is a remnant of a pre-settlement woodland that existed in much of the area once called Big Grove, and to inspect the steep ravine (across from Hawk Shelter) where we witnessed lots of evidence of woodpeckers working the trees. Unfortunately, we were not rewarded with a Pileated Woodpecker sighting.

The group wrapped up the trip sitting in the bird blind where we enjoyed up-close looks at Black-capped Chickadees, Tufted Titmice, a White-throated Sparrow, and numerous woodpeckers. We were able to study the size and behavior differences of the Downy, Red-headed, and Red-bellied Woodpeckers. A single Purple Finch sat down just before the end of the trip, capping off a wonderful day, outside in the beautiful Iowa winter weather.

At the end of the trip everyone unanimously agreed they were cured of their cabin fever!

Participants: Jodee Bixler, Mary Bowler, Brian Broderick, Chris Edwards, Tamra Elliott, Nancy and Pat Hanson, Linda Quinn, Deb and Mark Rolfes (leaders), Bill and Donna Warner.

Birds (20 Species): Canada Goose, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, Purple Finch,

American Goldfinch, Dark-eyed Junco, White-throated Sparrow, Northern Cardinal.

– *Deb and Mark Rolfes*

**March 4, Kent Park Bird Walk.** What a glorious morning it was to be walking in the park. The sun was nice and bright, it was above freezing, and the only remaining signs of winter were ice on the ponds and patches of snow. All the lakes and ponds in Kent Park were still iced over, although most were turning dark. This boy would not have walked on them. The only actual open water we saw was a 2-foot diameter circular open area in the pond below the Fishing Pond. There were some animal tracks on the ice in that pond which we could not identify, as we did not want to venture onto the ice. I wondered about otters.

Some of the birds were clearly starting to think with their hormones, as there were pairs chasing each other. The Canada Geese seemed mostly paired up and very concerned about other geese near their pond. We were a bit surprised by the scarcity of juncos and the absence of other sparrows.

On my way home from Kent Park I saw a Turkey Vulture, three American Kestrels, a Horned Lark, and a small flock of five Common Grackles. The only open water I saw was right in the vicinity of Tom's Pond on Half Moon Avenue.

Participants: Debbie Bryant, Jerry Denning, Rick Hollis (leader), Sharon Somers, Donna Warner.

Birds (17 species): Greater White-fronted Goose, Canada Goose, duck sp., *Accipiter* sp., Red-headed Woodpecker, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, American Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, European Starling, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, American Goldfinch, Dark-eyed Junco, Red-winged Blackbird.

– *Rick Hollis*

**March 7, Burlington Area and Mississippi River.** Seven of us met Chuck Fuller at the Port of Burlington for a great day of birding. The day was chilly, starting with 34° F with little wind. Our birding started with the Peregrine Falcon perched at the top of the bridge over the Mississippi River. During the morning we saw a lot of Turkey Vultures in the air. The Carolina Wrens at the storm sewer walk did not disappoint. On the shore of the Mississippi River at Green Bay Bottoms we found a paddlefish carcass – certainly something most of us had never seen. We ended the day with 63 species.

This was the last field trip before all group events were cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic. We are looking forward to the day we can go on a field trip together again.

Participants: Phyllis Black, Kathy Broghammer, Jerry Denning, Karen Disbrow (co-leader), Chuck Fuller (co-leader), Jamie McCoy, Dick Sayles, Glen Wiltgen.

Birds (63 species): Snow Geese, Canada Goose, Trumpeter Swan, Wood Duck, Northern Shoveler, Gadwall, American Wigeon, Mallard, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal, Canvasback, Redhead, Ring-necked Duck, Lesser Scaup, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Hooded Merganser, Common Merganser, Ruddy Duck, Pied-billed Grebe, Rock Pigeon, Eurasian Collared-Dove, Mourning Dove, American Coot, Killdeer, Ring-billed Gull, Herring Gull, Double-crested Cormorant, American White Pelican, Turkey Vulture, Cooper's Hawk, Bald Eagle, Red-tailed Hawk, Red-bellied Woodpecker, Downy Woodpecker, Hairy Woodpecker, American Kestrel, Peregrine Falcon, Blue Jay, American Crow, Horned Lark, Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White-breasted Nuthatch, Winter Wren, Carolina Wren, Eastern Bluebird, American Robin, European Starling, House Sparrow, Eurasian Tree Sparrow, House Finch, American Goldfinch, American Tree Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco, White-throated Sparrow, Song Sparrow, Swamp Sparrow, Eastern Meadowlark, Red-winged Blackbird,

Brown-headed Cowbird, Common Grackle, Northern Cardinal.

– *Karen Disbrow*

**Editor’s Note:** the remaining field trips on our winter schedule were cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic, and no traditional field trips were scheduled for spring or summer.

**September 6, Cy-Hawk Big Day Challenge.**

The seventh annual Cy-Hawk event was a bit different than previous years. Instead of birding in teams under traditional Big Day rules, participants were allowed to bird alone. This resulted in a lot more participation from across the state. There were 40 birders from all corners of the state for the Hawkeyes, and 38 birders for the Cyclones. The weather was a factor, as heavy rain swept across the state in the early morning, followed by strong winds and high temperatures in the 90s in the afternoon.

Both sides produced outstanding results. The final tally: Hawkeyes 182, Cyclones 171. The combined list for both teams was an amazing 199 species! That included 15 waterfowl species, 25 shorebirds, 13 raptors, 11 flycatchers, 7 vireos, 12 sparrows, and 26 warblers. A complete checklist can be found on our website.

The top team effort was 104 species for the Hawkeyes by Joe Jungers, Paul Roisen, and Lee Schoenewe in Palo Alto, Clay, and Dickinson counties. The top solo effort was 99 species for the Cyclones by Ryan Thompson in Polk County. Honorable mention goes to Mark Brown with 91 species in Johnson and Louisa counties, and Rita Goranson with 87 species in Kossuth County.

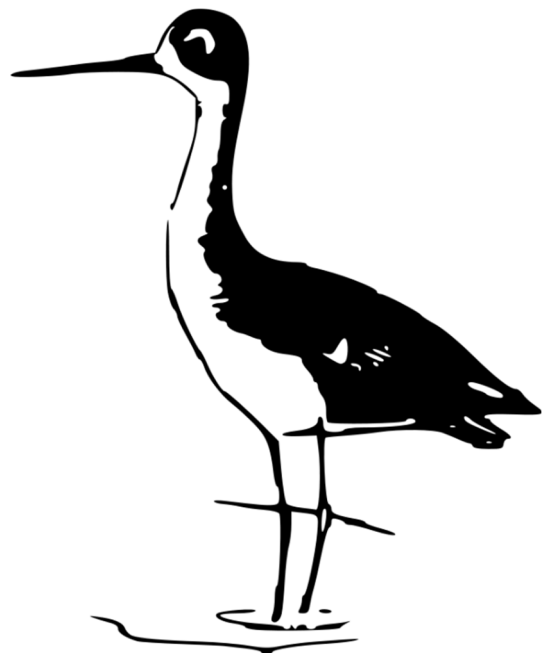
“Best” birds were a Little Gull at Little Swan Lake found by Joe Jungers, Paul Roisen, and Lee Schoenewe, and a Western Tanager in Denny Thompson’s backyard in Johnston. Other great finds included Greater White-fronted Goose, Canvasback, Ruddy Duck, Eastern Whip-poor-will, Common Gallinule, Black-necked Stilt, American Avocet, White-rumped Sandpiper, Buff-breasted Sandpiper, Willet, Red-necked

Phalarope, Mississippi Kite, Merlin, Western Kingbird, White-eyed Vireo, Fish Crow, Clay-colored Sparrow, Dark-eyed Junco (record early), Hooded Warbler, Cape May Warbler, Cerulean Warbler, Blackpoll Warbler, and Black-throated Blue Warbler.

With the win, the Iowa City Bird Club retains the Kent-Dinsmore traveling trophy for another year. For those who haven’t seen it, it’s a duck decoy painted black and gold on one side, cardinal and gold on the other side, and mounted on a wooden base. Thanks to everyone who joined in the fun this year!

Participants for the Hawkeyes: Brian and Jan Allen, Nick Benson, Phyllis Black, Jayden Bowen, Mark Brown, Brandon Caswell, Ray Cummins, LeAnn Dahn and husband, Jerry Denning, Karen Disbrow, Sandy Eads, Chris Edwards, Chuck Fuller, Jay Gilliam, Janet Greer, Candace Havelly, Rick Hollis, James Huntington, Joe Jungers, Kerry King, Kate Kostenbader, Ted Lopic, Ken Lowder, Betty Lucas, Mark Madsen, Jamie McCoy, Jason McCurdy, Ramona McGurk, Toney Moline, Diana Pesek, Linda Quinn, Deb and Mark Rolfs, Paul Roisen, Dave Schealer, Lee Schoenewe, Betty and Ric Zarwell.

– *Chris Edwards*





## Bird Notes

### Rick Hollis

Most birders know the song and call of the White-throated Sparrow. I have been fortunate to live in their winter range, my entire life. I look forward to hearing their sharp metallic *chink* calls, and as fall turns to winter and then spring, I start to hear their songs. Often in early spring they start out somewhat misarranged, but pretty soon they settle into their ‘Old Sam Peabody Peabody Peabody’ songs. Or as our Canadian friends tell me, ‘Oh, Sweet Canada Canada Canada.’ Sometimes I hear them sing what I thought were partial songs, ‘Old Sam Peabod Peabod Peabod.’ Boy, was I wrong. What I was hearing was a new version of the old song. This was apparently first heard in one single bird in British Columbia, and someone described it as a “weird” song. Over the next couple of years, that variant song became the only song heard in BC, and then it spread east through Canada to the Great Lakes and beyond. This is an extraordinarily short period for a song to change. Over the course of examining songs submitted to eBird/Macaulay and xeno-canto, noting the dates and geographic locations, the authors came up with a theory: the birds are learning and sharing the new song on their wintering grounds. Then they travel back north to their breeding grounds with the new song. The newest recordings they studied were from 2015-2019. During that time, most of the birds breeding west of the Great Lakes or wintering east of the Great Lakes sang the old songs, but all other birds sang the new song.

This brings me to a challenge. Let’s all keep track of what we are hearing. Starting in say February, count what you are hearing. Are the birds singing ‘Old Sam Peabody Peabody Peaebody,’ or are they singing ‘Old Sam Peabod Peabod Peabod?’ In mid-May send me your results. I will add them all up and report back with the results.

Otter et al., Continent-wide Shifts in Song Dialects of White-Throated Sparrows, *Current Biology* (2020), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cub.2020.05.084>

## Remembering Terry Escher

### Karen Disbrow

I met Terry Escher, the Natural Resources Specialist for the Corps of Engineers, during planning meetings for the 2009 Coralville WinterFest. Then in early 2010, Terry asked if I would help her setup a Turkey Vulture festival. She wanted to do something different than the typical Bald Eagle events held at other Corps sites. At that time hundreds of Turkey Vultures regularly used the south face of the Coralville Dam to sun and dry their wings in the mornings. We held the first Turkey Vulture Festival in 2010. It is one of just two or three similar festivals in the nation. Thus, a partnership was formed between the Corps and the Iowa City Bird Club.

In 2011, Iowa Audubon was looking for a new site for their Pelican Festival, and I suggested the Coralville Reservoir. Terry and I worked together on the Executive Committee to determine a location, find speakers, arrange a food vendor, and invite conservation groups to participate.

In 2013 the new director at the Corps wanted a Bald Eagle event, so once again Terry and I teamed up and created the Bald Eagle Watch & Expo, which was held for five years.

In her role with the Corps, Terry led school groups through the Devonian Fossil Gorge. She trained volunteers to lead groups for special projects. She arranged Saturday evening speakers at the Sugar Bottom Campground. Those child water safety vests found at local boat ramps? Yep, Terry headed that effort. She was quite an artist, and designed the temporary tattoos we used at family events, and the fliers for all three of the bird festivals

Terry retired in September 2017, and the next year she and her sister moved to Ankeny. Last year she was diagnosed with stomach cancer, and underwent surgery and two rounds of chemotherapy. She passed away June 9, 2020. A memorial service will be held in Coralville whenever the pandemic allows us to gather again.

## In Memoriam – Richard Tetrault

Richard “Dick” Tetrault, longtime member of the Iowa City Bird Club and Iowa Ornithologists’ Union, passed away February 25, 2020. Our condolences go to his wife Gerry and his entire family. The following is excerpted from his obituary.

Alvah Richard Tetrault left this life just as he lived it, fearless, determined, and full of love, acceptance, gratitude, and smiles. He was, as everyone said, one of a kind. He was born in North Dakota, which he would like you to know is God’s country, and moved to Iowa City in the 1960s, after completing a master’s degree in agricultural economics at North Dakota State University. He spent his career as a farm loan agent, putting more miles on a car in a year than seems humanly possible, traversing Eastern Iowa as his professional beat. Next to him in the car was always a pair of binoculars and a field guide to birds.

Long before it was fashionable, Richard loved the little things: a Western Bluebird on a fence post or a Great Blue Heron hidden in the cattails. He found joy everywhere he went. And made

friends everywhere he went too. Exuberant, generous, inquisitive, and adventurous, he was the light of every room—and of so many lives. He is survived by Gerry Tetrault, the love of his life (his final words) and his wife of thirty years. Together, they nurtured six kids and created adventures. They traveled to every continent. They drove the entire country. They whooped ass in bridge. In retirement, they wintered in Arizona, where Richard passed. Every evening, they sat down together with a glass of wine, perfectly content with each other’s company. She cared for him with tenderness and love up through the end.

He gave us the gifts of unqualified love, laughter, and commitment. He always made plans to visit his family, no matter where they were. He would refuse to let anyone pay for meals or drinks—always treating you with his characteristic open generosity. He taught us more than he could have ever known. We, too, all have our binoculars and bird books. We’ll see his love reflected in every spring warbler, Red-headed Woodpecker, and goldfinch. Memorial gifts may be made in his name to the Iowa Ornithologists’ Union. His ashes will be returned to the land he loved, his native North Dakota—in the Walhalla Hillside Cemetery.

### IOWA CITY BIRD CLUB MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

Please send this form with your annual membership dues to Larry Mahoney, 2223 Cae Drive, Iowa City, IA 52246. Annual membership dues per household are \$15 for a print subscription, \$10 for an email subscription, or \$10 for students for a print subscription. Make checks payable to “Eastern Iowa Birdwatch”. Members receive a 10% discount on birdseed and suet at Ace Hardware at 600 N. Dodge Street, Iowa City, and Forever Green Garden Center at 125 Forevergreen Rd., Coralville.

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## Iowa City Bird Club

[www.iowacitybirdclub.org](http://www.iowacitybirdclub.org)

**Annual membership dues** are \$15 per household for a print subscription, \$10 for an email subscription via our Google Group, or \$10 for students for a print subscription, payable by January 1 for the coming year. Check your mailing label or contact Treasurer Larry Mahoney at [ltjmahoney@aol.com](mailto:ltjmahoney@aol.com) for the year you have paid through. Make checks payable to Eastern Iowa Birdwatch and mail to Larry Mahoney, 2223 Cae Drive, Iowa City, IA 52246.

**Visit our web site** at [www.iowacitybirdclub.org](http://www.iowacitybirdclub.org). You may contact Webmaster Mark Graber at [markagraber@gmail.com](mailto:markagraber@gmail.com). Also visit Iowa City Bird Club on Facebook.

**Join our Google Group** to receive email announcements of upcoming meetings, field trips, and other events, and the email version of our newsletter. Email Linda Quinn at [quinnhenry@msn.com](mailto:quinnhenry@msn.com) to sign up.

**For general club information**, contact Rick Hollis at 319-665-3141 or [xiboia@earthlink.net](mailto:xiboia@earthlink.net).

**To lead or suggest a field trip**, contact Field Trip Coordinator Linda Quinn at 319-330-3328 or [quinnhenry@msn.com](mailto:quinnhenry@msn.com).

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### ***Eastern Iowa Birdwatch***

**Chris Edwards, Editor**  
4490 Daniels Cir. NE  
Solon, IA 52333

